

NILGIRI SALEA

Opportunistic feeding behaviour of *Salea horsfieldii*



Predator and prey
Salea horsfieldii* and *Raorchestes signatus

IUCN Red List:

Salea horsfieldii
Global — Least
Concern (Srinivasulu
et al. 2014)

Raorchestes signatus
Global — Endangered
(Biju et al. 2004)

Reptilia
[Class of Reptiles]

Squamata
[Order of Scaled
Reptiles]

Agamidae
[Family of iguanian
lizards]

Salea horsfieldii
[Horsfield's Spiny Lizard]
[Nilgiri Salea]

Species described by
Gray in 1845

The Nilgiri Salea or Horsfield's Spiny Lizard *Salea horsfieldii* and Cross-backed Bush Frog *Raorchestes signatus* are endemic to the Western Ghats; reported in the Nilgiri Hills, India. Both species inhabit the high altitudes shola and grassland habitats, found on bushes, hedges and in gardens (Smith 1943; Biju & Bossuyt 2009).

While carrying out survey on 24 July 2016 (07:50:05 hr), at Emerald (11°19'30.30"N & 76°37'14.54"E), Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India, we observed a predation event by *S. horsfieldii* on *R. signatus*. Both species were sitting on bushes in close proximity to the surveyor 15–20 cm. The Nilgiri Salea approached very close, abruptly seized the *R. signatus*, swallowing the entire individual within a few minutes. Nixon (2015) had noted that

this species largely fed on insects, with a smaller proportion of its food constituted by vegetation; however, the present details the first report by this endemic lizard, indicating that this species may feed opportunistically on small frogs.



Global Distribution:

Nilgiri Salea
Endemic to Western
Ghats (Kerala & Tamil
Nadu).

Cross-backed Bush
Frog
Endemic to Western
Ghats (Kerala & Tamil
Nadu).

References

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